

## Briefing Paper

**Wildlife****(T&E Species, Regional Forester Sensitive Species and Game Species)*****Key Message***

*The Superior National Forest will continue to provide habitat for a vast array of wildlife species. The Revised Plan sets objectives for vegetation that provides wildlife habitat that will ensure continued recovery for bald eagle, gray wolf, and Canada lynx, which are species on the Federal endangered list. The Forest Service worked closely with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to ensure continued recovery of these species. The Revised Plan also provides habitat sufficient to maintain viability of species.*

*The Revised Plan gradually reduces the emphasis that the 1986 Plan placed on game species habitat and turns the emphasis toward managing for the entire spectrum of wildlife habitats.*

***The Plan:***

- *Maintains viable populations of all desired species on the Superior National Forest within the capability of the land.*
- *Results in no species trending toward listing under the Threatened and Endangered Species Act.*
- *Affords special attention to the conservation of bald eagle, gray wolf, and Canada lynx and the habitats upon which they depend.*
- *Decreases the amount of aspen and young tree age classes, but will still maintains high levels of important game species habitats such as deer, grouse, and woodcock.*

***Change from the 1986 Plan***

The 1986 Plan focused on stand level management and standards and guidelines for the protection of TES and RFS Species. Wildlife habitat management was focused largely on game species. The Revised Plan focuses on broadscale or “coarse filter” habitat management using representative wildlife species of management concern associated with each Management Indicator Habitat to track on conditions across the landscape then with focused or “fine filter” analysis for specific species where conditions in habitats cause concern.

***Change from Proposed Plan***

Added a guideline to protect wolf dens.

Added and refined standards and guidelines to address concerns related to lynx. Changes were largely related to road and trail density, effective road closures and increases in over- the- snow routes.

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**Management Indicator Species**

Because of scientific limitations of using individual species to indicate effects on many other species, a limited number (four) of management indicator species were selected: white pine, grey wolf, bald eagle and goshawk. Additional indicators, in the form of management indicator habitats were used because it was determined that they better reflect the broad spectrum of major wildlife management issues and challenges than individual species.

**Management Indicator Habitat**

Management indicator habitats represent the major biological communities on the National Forests that are affected by management. In other words, they provide a “coarse filter” that represents the array of native ecosystems of the National Forests - with emphasis on those that would be most affected by management and whose conditions would vary by alternative. In summary, management indicator habitats were developed to generally encompass coarse filter habitats associated with as many species as possible to provide a practical and efficient approach to addressing the thousands of species that are found on the National Forests.